

MI KIDS

I always liked them as babies, of course.
They're so easy to love
with their perfect innocence,
the way they totally trust and depend.

Naturally, they believe
I'm the best father in the whole wide world;
I can do no wrong in their eyes.
It makes me want to prove them right
by telling them funny stories,
holding them in my lap and being
big and wonderful, three times their size.

But now, after ten years of marriage
and five years of fatherhood, I find
I'm finally becoming comfortable in the role,
liking it and needing it more than ever.
I've become a doting father,
take pictures of them in pretty new dresses.
I find myself standing over their beds
blissfully in love,
pulling up the blankets to the five year old's chin,
covering her bared little bottom,
or tucking in a ragged Minney Mouse doll
nestled up beside the littlest one's face.

Now that their mother works at night
serving up hotdogs at the Los Altos Drive-In,
we spend all our evenings together.
I make our dinner, frozen burritos or fish sticks,
while they watch re-runs of BEWITCHED.
Then we eat and watch the BRADY BUNCH.
I enjoy the shows as much as they do, remembering
most of the episodes from my own childhood.

By the time we're finished, I LOVE LUCY is on.
And although I'm doing dishes in the kitchen,
my hands deep in suds and hot water,
I can hear Ricky and Lucy in the other room.
Then we sit at the kitchen table,
coloring with the kid's crayons. Or,
if we're feeling extravagant, painting
with my Dr. Martin's watercolors
on expensive art store paper.

I feed them, bathe them, put them to bed
night after night, Wednesday through Sunday. And
although my social life has long since become null & void,
I hardly mind anymore, preferring
my daughters' good company
to the sadness I'm finding in bars these days.